

## NATIONAL THEATRE

## Women Organize to Found Non-Commercial Playhouse.

A progressive movement by women is particularly interesting at all times; none more so than now. It means the result of careful thought and preparation, and that there is a determination to succeed which instantly commands attention. The Women's National Theatre movement has attained a degree of prominence which speaks success. Of course, many will question its practicability because it is a woman's movement, but it is an incorporated organization, under Delaware State laws, and that means it is founded upon a sound business basis. With a paid non-professional membership of over 400 there is evidence of financial interest; this membership is from all professions and degrees of society, and is steadily growing.

While the Women's National Theatre stands for non-commercialism, it will seek to be self-supporting; but in a practical manner. It will be thoroughly democratic in administration; will not establish a censorship of plays; exploit any member in any manner; oppose the producing managers; but it will aim to encourage the highest ideals in the American actor and playwright. It is not being promoted by dreamers, but will be directed by a board composed of men and women of artistic attainments, the woman's influence being a dominant feature. The Women's National Theatre will seek to profit by the mistakes of other idealistic efforts, preferring to begin in an humble manner and expand with the growth of the effort.

The fundamental principles have been copied from the national theatres of Europe and adapted to the needs of the United States. Its specific aims can best be explained by the following selections from its prospectus:

"Since three-fourths of the audiences at all theatrical performances are women; since women are actresses, producers, playwrights, theatrical agents, play brokers, theatre managers and dramatic critics; since the theatre is the most important institution of social influence, and the woman's movement the most important social expression in the United States to-day, and since the civic problem: 'How occupy profitably and pleasurably the leisure of the people?' is one of the most serious problems of the times, this company is formed by women to organize and operate theatrical companies, productions and theatres within the City of New York and other cities of the United States."

The principles actuating organization are these: "To bring back to the ranks of the theatre patrons the very large class who have abandoned the playhouse as a luxury beyond their means; to give to the awakened desire of the public at a minimum scale of prices at night and daily performances the truest interpretation of American life through the most human of all the arts—that of the stage. To meet the desire of the Church and schools, that the stage may, through its far-reaching power, become a co-worker for good in civic life and education. To encourage and stimulate the American actor, actress and playwright. To profit by the example of European countries endeavoring to implant a love and understanding of the theatre in the hearts and minds of the young."

The founder and president of the Women's National Theatre (Inc.) is Mrs. R. V. Martinson, sr., Hotel Somerset, New York City; vice-presidents, Miss Mary Shaw, Mrs. Edith Ellis Furness and Miss Jessie Bonstelle; secretary and treasurer, Mrs. Axel O. Hilsen.

## ETHEL VALENTINE

## Young Actress Tells How She Secured Leading Role.

Just how a timid young actress feels when she applies to a famous playwright for a position is related by Miss Ethel Valentine, the young Western stock actress, who, unknown and unheralded, experienced the surprise of her life when made leading lady of "To-day," now in its eighth month at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre.

"How did I secure the part of Lily Warner in 'To-day'?" echoed Miss Valentine when asked by a reporter. "It's not a long story. I've always admired Mr. Broadhurst's plays. For I have played in most of them that have been released for stock, such as 'What Happened to Jones,' 'Why Smith Left Home,' 'The Man of the Hour,' etc."

"When I saw 'To-day' I felt that I must see him and ask him to let me read Lily—so I wrote a letter, never hoping to get an answer. But he consented to see me and he gave me the part to read. I was never so frightened in my life."

"Mr. Broadhurst wasn't at all what I thought he would be. He doesn't act as I supposed a famous playwright would. He was so very kind! On my first performance he and Harry Von Tilzer gave me their heartiest encouragement. He made some notes of the wrong things I did, of course—and there must have been a great many more than he wrote."

"But he gave them to me, and I am so proud of them that I have had them bound and they are to hang in my dressing room as long as I play Lily Warner."

Prior to making her debut as leading lady on Broadway Miss Valentine had stock experience in St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha and Philadelphia. She has proved the surprise of the theatrical season and is the envy of many leading women of established reputations who would have sacrificed a great deal to get the opportunity that was given her.

## RYAN AND LEE

## Their Act of Nonsense an Overnight Hit.

Theatregoers often read about understudies who gain fame and position in a single night and of chorus girls who jump in and play principal parts at a few moments' notice, scoring a "hit" which brings them into the prominence they have been dreaming of for years. But few have attended the vaudeville theatres inasmuch how many acts are produced which are never heard after the "try-out." Then again, vaudeville acts springing up in a night score a hit and become headlines in a short time.

To the latter class belong Ben Ryan and Harriette Lee, who appear in vaudeville in a comedy skit called "You've Spoiled It." Ryan and Lee are a team of vaudeville singing and dancing comedians, who came to New York a short time ago, unheralded and practically unknown. They were billed simply as a "singing and dancing team," and very little attention was paid to them. They were given an opportunity to "show" their act, and became overnight the vaudeville hit of New York. Every

one seemed to be talking of them, but no one described them, because that was impossible.

They just trotted out in front of a "street drop" at the Colonial and started in to deliver a lot of cross-fire talk that was sheer nonsense, but they handled it in a way that made the laughs come steadily, and before they were on the stage many minutes the people in the front of the house were looking at their programmes to find out who the newcomers were, where they came from and what they were supposed to be doing. The audience didn't care about all this, but it was the way the little team of entertainers were making them laugh at nothing that interested everyone.

Harriette Lee is an eccentric comedienne of rare quality. She handles nearly all the comedy of the act and does it in an original, fun-making way that makes her irresistible. She is most distinctive in her style and a place among the few who reach the top is waiting her.

## ARNOLD DALY

## Self-Taught Star Advises Serious Study.

Arnold Daly is a self-taught star, who worked his way up to the top from such a humble beginning as office boy for Charles Frohman. Young Daly was a remarkable office boy, and Mr. Frohman still tells stories of the pugnacious young Brooklyn Irishman who regarded dramatists, stars and the garden variety of artists from a serene Olympian height of indifference. Daly fought his way to stardom. He has succeeded as actor and producer and as actor-manager. He has a superb technical equipment for the theatre, coupled with a blazing idealism.

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tinged with Celtic melancholy. Because of his own struggles to learn the art of the theatre Daly is friendly to the new school of drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, in Pittsburgh, where students are given a four-year course in all that pertains to the playhouse. He says: "I would advise young men and women who desire to take up the stage for a livelihood to study it scientifically and aesthetically as a great and noble calling. The Carnegie Institute recognizes the stage as a career by founding its school of drama, and I predict that the men trained there for the theatre will be heard of in the future and will be in demand by the financiers who build playhouses and produce plays."

"Think of it! Here is a school with a brilliant teaching staff and equipped with a magnificent theatre where one can learn to produce, to design scenery, to paint scenery, to build properties, to design and make costumes, to write sketches and plays and to cast them. All this is in addition to teaching the art of the actor; how to speak English with exquisite accuracy, how to portray emotions, how to fence, how to walk, how to dance, how to do everything demanded on the stage. They teach you to act, to produce, to design. You study the history of the theatre and the lives of great players. In a word, this is a university of the theatre, and the young, ambitious man who spends four years there should receive his degree, equipped with all the technical knowledge that it has taken a lifetime to acquire. The theatre is the most democratic of institutions and is either cursed or adored. Though as old as humanity it has never been studied until to-day."

**Hans Merx in Recital.**  
A good sized audience heard Hans Merx, the German lieder singer, in his last recital of the season at the Waldorf Astoria on Monday May 11. Mr. Merx was accorded a hearty reception by an enthusiastic audience composed principally of music lovers. N. Valentine Peavey was the accompanist.

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